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Bare cops, CIA anti-war spy link

By Brian J. Kelly

A Chicago group suing the government for illegal surveillance activities presented documentary evidence Tuesday that the Central Intelligence Agency was involved in gathering information about anti-Vietnam War groups and worked closely with the Chicago Police Department.

The Alliance to End Repression, a coalition of several reform organizations that previously has revealed intelligence abuses of the FBI and the Chicago Police Department's "Red Squad," said that the CIA was "part of that intelligence-gathering conspiracy."

At a press conference in the Blackstone Hotel, the alliance revealed that it had obtained copies of CIA files on 10 Chicago area individuals and organizations involved with the anti-war movement and demonstrations at the 1968 Democratic National Convention here. Much of the information in the reports was collected by the Red Squad.

THE ALLIANCE NAMED Deputy Supt. Patrick Needham as the CIA's liaison with the Police Department. The files contained a May 26, 1977, teletype writer message from the CIA Chicago office to Washington that described Needham as "a most co-operative, understanding and helpful police official who has assisted this office many times in the past 10 years."

Needham said in a prepared statement that his contacts with the CIA "princpally" involved arranging visits to the Police Department by foreign dignitaries. He said no investigations or surveillance by police were involved.

He called his relations with the CIA "ordinary" and compared it to normal relations with many other local, state and federal agencies. He said it arose through his jobs as executive assistant to the superintendent and later as a deputy superintendent.

The alliance contends that any domestic intelligence gathering by the CIA is illegal because the agency's charter specifies that it can engage only in international activities.

"Without even getting into a First Amendment debate this is clearly illegal," said Richard Gutman, alliance spokesman. "Congress, I think, has a pretty good idea of the kind of things the CIA would do abroad and it didn't want them doing those things in our country. The charter tries to prevent a domestic Gestapo from forming."

Gutman said the CIA activities were restricted to intelligence gathering and did not involve any of the disruptive actions that have been attributed to the FBI and Red Squ

WITH GUTMAN at the press conference were three plaintiffs in the lawsuit that forced the CIA to present the documents. Sidney Lens, a political writer and former chairman of the Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam, said the CIA looked at his political activities, opened his mail "and even checked up on my sex life."

"The worst part," said Lens, "is that at the beginning of their biography on me, the CIA says I'm 'probably a loyal American citizen.'"

Lens also accused the First National Bank of Chicago of conspiring with the CIA to allow the agency access to his bank records on several occasions. He quoted a CIA memo that said "periodic and thorough" examinations of his checking account activity at First National were made from May, 1959, to September, 1966. He didn't know if checks had been made since then.

A spokesman for First National denied giving the CIA access to Lens' records, saying: "We are just as baffled as Mr. Lens if some of his bank records turned up in CIA files. It is bank policy not to reveal confidential customer information except under subpena from the proper authorities."

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE were the Rev. William Hogan, a Roman Catholic priest who was watched by the CIA because of his part in the draft-resistance movement, and A. A. (Sammy) Rayner Jr., a former alderman who supported the Black Panthers and later ran unsuccessfully for a seat in Congress.

The CIA documents were heavily edited, with many deletions of supposed classified material that Gutman said would be challenged in court.

Most of the information in the documents seemed to be basic intelligence that could have been gathered by organizations much less sophisticated than the CIA. There was at least one instance of the reports quoting newspapers.

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